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The Path to Prosperity would lift the crushing burden of record high debt, spur economic growth and job creation, and fulfill our Nation's obligations to the health and retirement security of every American.

With the Path to Prosperity, the budget that Republicans adopted in the House 2 weeks ago, Americans will be back on the road to more jobs for today and a bankrupt-free nation for tomorrow.

GAS PRICES AND MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, before I begin to share my thoughts this morning about how the Republican budget is a blow to our American ideas and priorities, I would be remiss if I didn't use this opportunity to praise our men and women in uniform, our President, and his advisers for the extraordinary courage and capability they all demonstrated in the mission that put an end to Osama bin Laden on Sunday.

Being from New York, we know firsthand of the consequences of this horrible, horrible action that Osama bin Laden took on September 11, 2001. I can't tell you how many families in my congressional district were hurt, lost their loved ones, children becoming orphans in ways that it is going to take them years, if forever, to recover.

That is why Sunday was so important. It was a moment in history, our history. We told the world as Americans, we're going to fight not only for each other but we're going to fight for our rights, our ideals that are at the core of our very being.

I would hope that, in the aftermath of Sunday, we would be able to come together in the way that we did after September 11. We need to find more ways to come together. We need to work together for the good of our constituents, for the good of our country. But that doesn't mean that we don't have extraordinary differences of opinion, and that's what I'm here to talk about today. I'm here to talk about the budget that the House Republican majority just passed—and I voted against—on April 15. I believe that that budget is a document that lays out the wrong priorities.

Trust me when I say that I'm as anxious as anyone about our Nation's fiscal policies, but we also need to make sure that, in the process, we do not kill thousands of jobs and hurt millions of American families. A budget, as far as I'm concerned, is a moral document. It should be a declaration of our country's priorities. But the Republican budget does anything but that. It hurts our most vulnerable citizens while giving tax breaks to our oil companies.

I spent over 33 years as a nurse before I came to Congress, and let me tell you, the one thing that strikes me every week when I come down to Washington is the disconnect that I see between a lot of the politicians here and the people who are back home struggling in their districts.

The budget that was passed by Republicans is absolutely out of touch with the people back in my district. How in the world can you undermine the health and well-being of our seniors at the same time that you continue to give the richest companies on the planet tax breaks? That's not what the people in my district want. The seniors, and all the people in my district, want health care. They feel like that as they get older, they want the peace of mind to know that they have access to the greatest health care system in the world. They've paid for that right. As they worked throughout their life, they paid into the Medicare system. They believe that they have the right to Medicare, and I agree with them.

Yet the Republican budget fundamentally undermines that right. The Republican budget ends Medicare as we know it. It eliminates guaranteed coverage for our seniors and turns the program into a voucher program. This is a drastic, drastic concept.

Let's not try to pretty things up here. Republicans are essentially pushing seniors into the private marketplace where they will pay more and get less. As health care keeps rising with inflation, these vouchers will not keep pace. As the Congressional Budget Office has said, Medicare beneficiaries would bear a much larger share of their health care costs. The result would be absolutely awful for our seniors. We are going to see our parents and our sisters and our brothers faced with awful choices: Are they going to pay higher premiums? Are they going to have to get health plans that cover less? Or, even worse, will they drop out and have no health care at all?

Cutting our health care system isn't the only way that families are being hurt. The high price of gas is hurting families across this country and certainly in New York. Across the country and definitely on Long Island, the price of gas has climbed way above \$4. Yet in what is an absolutely mind-boggling position, Republicans in Congress still refuse to allow a vote to repeal the billions of dollars in taxpayer money that oil companies are getting. Exxon, for instance, just took in \$10.7 billion during the first 3 months of the year alone. That's a 69 percent increase over the same time frame from last year. Other companies have enjoyed the same increases, all while continuing to receive \$4 billion annually in subsidies.

Mr. Speaker, we're Americans. We can disagree, but we're supposed to be fighting for this country. We need to make sure we protect our seniors. We need to make sure we have jobs. We need to make sure that we keep this country safe.

God bless America.

The oil companies aren't struggling companies in need of a helping hand. They're companies with huge profits receiving billions of dollars in wasteful government spending.

I'm not a person who is against drilling.

I believe that we need a comprehensive energy policy that takes advantage of clean energy, but also takes advantage of the natural resources that we've been blessed with.

I also believe that we need to be aggressive in taking on the oil speculators who are profiting from the ballooning price of oil.

But what I find particularly abhorrent is that, at a time where Republicans are claiming that our country's fiscal problems are an excuse for us to undermine the needs of our seniors, many of whom live month-to-month, we are at the same time giving oil companies \$4 billion in tax breaks.

Those are not the priorities that I believe in.

And those are not the priorities that my constituents believe in.

A budget is a moral document of our priorities. It should say something about a country's values.

That's why, to turn back to Sunday for a second, that heroic rescue said so much about our country.

Americans persevere, Americans fight for their values, and Americans are unrelenting in their efforts.

But we do those things because we want safety and security for our families.

We want to see our children and grandchildren grow up in a country where fairness and equity is the order of the day.

The Republican budget is not about fairness and equity.

It is about hurting our seniors—and doing so in order to give oil companies, who are wealthy beyond belief, additional tax breaks.

That's not just.

That's not fair.

That is not what I came to Congress to fight for.

STORM AND DISASTER RELIEF IN NORTH CAROLINA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Mrs. ELLMERS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago on Saturday, April 16, North Carolina was struck with vicious tornadoes that caused unprecedented destruction and despair throughout the State and in my district. The loss of property will take years to rebuild, but the lives that were lost can never be replaced. In an instant, lives were cut short, leaving families with a gaping hole that can never be filled. With over 24 deaths throughout the State, this tragedy has touched each of us on a personal level.

Our district was hit especially hard with six of our 10 counties affected, but thanks to the resources provided by President Obama's emergency declaration and officials at FEMA, we have been able to turn this tragedy into a swift recovery.

On behalf of all North Carolinians, I would like to thank the officials at FEMA, the American Red Cross, the

Small Business Administration, and emergency first responders for taking swift action and providing our district with supplies, funding, and on-the-spot guidance for victims.

While we still have a tough road ahead, our district can take heart in the fact that every step is being taken to ensure that help will reach everyone affected and in a swift and efficient manner. I hope that all Americans will keep the residents and families of North Carolina and those families in Alabama and the other States that have been so terribly affected in their prayers as we continue to work in the rescue effort going forward.

Thank you. God bless America.

SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ALTMIRE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. ALTMIRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of the Small Business Innovation Research program. For over a quarter century, SBIR has been key to American competitiveness around the world. It has provided quality research, spurred technological advancements, and allowed innovative small businesses to partner with the government for the development of some of today's most cutting-edge goods and services.

The region I represent in western Pennsylvania is home to a number of companies that have benefited from the SBIR program, yet these companies have been faced with uncertainty over the past few years because Congress has failed to act on a full reauthorization. Short-term extensions are putting the future of research and development at risk. In this fragile economy, Congress owes it to these innovators to give them the certainty they need to fully pursue their ideas.

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I have supported legislation to reauthorize this program for the past 4 years because I understand the importance of innovation and the Federal Government's unique role in creating a fertile climate for it. In the past, whenever our Nation has bounced back from economic downturns, innovation has been the catalyst. Time and again, inventive ideas have led to new products, generating a wave of job creation and putting us on a path back to prosperity.

This year, I have joined with my colleagues on the Small Business Committee to introduce a full 3-year reauthorization of the SBIR program. As Congress looks for ways to reduce spending yet keep America globally competitive, the SBIR program is that rare piece of legislation that can accomplish both goals simultaneously.

At its most fundamental, the SBIR program provides valuable seed money for entrepreneurs who are willing to

explore untested concepts and, ultimately, develop new products. Additionally, it solves one of the primary concerns facing small businesses today—access to capital. This reauthorization would make important changes to the current program that will allow more entrepreneurs to participate by allowing companies that receive funding from multiple venture capital groups to competitively apply for a portion of SBIR grants.

Reauthorization of SBIR will allow us to continue to foster research and innovation that will translate into a wealth of new employment opportunities and economic growth for western Pennsylvania and all of America. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation that encourages creativity and ensures America will stay a global leader in innovation for years to come.

HONORING THE LIFE OF FORMER CONGRESSMAN ROBERT B. DUNCAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to comment on the passing of a dear friend and Oregon icon, former Congressman Robert Duncan, who died last week at age 90. Bob served his Nation with distinction beginning with his service during World War II in both the merchant marine and the U.S. Navy. After graduating from the University of Michigan Law School, he settled in Medford, Oregon, with his wife Marijane. He was a State legislator from that community. He served two terms as speaker for the first time in Oregon history.

From there, he went to serve in Congress, representing the Fourth Congressional District in southwest Oregon until he was persuaded by President Lyndon Johnson to leave Congress to run for a vacated U.S. Senate seat against Governor Mark Hatfield. In a campaign that defined Oregon politics for over a decade, Bob lost narrowly to Mark Hatfield in, to say the very least, a heated campaign, focusing in large measure over the United States' involvement in the war in Vietnam, which he supported and Mark Hatfield opposed. A significant development was the endorsement of then-Democratic U.S. Senator Wayne Morris of Republican Hatfield, which many experts feel provided the narrow margin of victory for Hatfield. Later, Bob almost won the Democratic primary against Wayne Morse when he ran for reelection 2 years later sending shockwaves that reverberated for a decade.

I first had the opportunity to work with Bob Duncan when I was directing a campaign to lower Oregon's voting age in 1969, and he was a zealous supporter of engaging young people in the political process.

In 1974, Bob again made history by being the first Oregonian to represent 2

different districts in Congress as he was elected to the Third Congressional District, which I am now privileged to represent. He continued for another 6 years of distinguished service, serving on the Appropriations Committee.

After leaving Congress in 1981, Bob returned to private practice as a lawyer in Portland and Washington, D.C., and later served on the Northwest Planning Power Council.

Bob had many passions in his life but none more important than his family. He was married 48 years to Marijane until her death in 1989, and later, he married Kathy Boe and found many years of happiness. Bob had seven children who survive him: Nancy, Angus, David, Jamie, Laurie, Bonnie and Jeanne.

He was by turns a stubborn political animal, generous of spirit, with a legacy for courage strengthened by his convictions. He was a man of great humor, intellect, and conviction. He was also thrifty to an extent that is legendary to family and friends and many of his constituents. Until the end of his life I would still get letters from him with a series of 3-cent stamps and the old congressional return address on the envelope scratched over. But he was very careful with the taxpayer money in his Appropriations Committee to an extent that sometimes drove even his supporters to distraction.

He leaves a legacy for courage, passion for justice, and accomplishment of decades of service, particularly a decade in two very different congressional districts that were united in the admiration of this dedicated public servant. He will be missed, but fondly remembered.

RAPIDLY RISING GAS PRICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. LANGEVIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to join together to immediately address one of the greatest problems facing our families and small business right now; that is, rapidly rising gas prices.

As I traveled across Rhode Island during the district work period, the issue of high gas prices was never far from anyone's mind. It affects every family's bottom line and the budgets of small businesses that are still recovering from the recession.

As our fragile economy continues, it is imperative that we work to find solutions in the short term as we turn our attention towards a serious, long-term solution to reduce our demand for oil. Our Nation simply cannot have low gas prices without reducing the amount of oil that we use.

We remain in constant competition right now with India, China, and other developing Nations, and the world does not have the resources to continue to supply us all with cheap oil, especially